

Message Text

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12

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

DLOS-06 SAL-01 EB-07 /076 W
----- 126359

R 231805Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0490

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 7186

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, PE, BL, CI

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR: SECOND ROUND PERU/CHILE TALKS
AND OVERALL STATUS AS SEEN FROM SANTIAGO

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 4060, (B) SANTIAGO 7076, (C) SANTIAGO 4890

1. SUMMARY: A CHILEAN DELEGATE TELLS US THAT CORDIALITY AND FURTHER PROGRESS ON TECHNICAL MATTERS CHARACTERIZED THE SECOND SERIES OF PERU/CHILE CONVERSATIONS ON THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR, HELD JULY 5-9 IN SANTIAGO. HE SAYS PERU NOW REALIZES NO OTHER SOLUTION WILL ASSUAGE BOLIVIA AND ACCEPTS CHILE'S CONTENTION THAT NO INSUPERABLE TECHNICAL OBJECTION TO A CORRIDOR EXISTS. FOR ITS PART, CHILE WILL NOT PRESS PERU FURTHER UNTIL BOLIVIA TABLES ITS PROPOSALS FOR SPECIFIC TERRITORIAL EXCHANGE. END SUMMARY.

2. CHILEAN AND PERUVIAN DELEGATIONS OFFICIALLY DESCRIBED THE SANTIAGO TALKS AS A FURTHER STEP IN ANALYZING THE RAMIFICATIONS OF "POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR." BLAND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS DREW ONLY MODEST MEDIA ATTENTION AND KEPT THE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT OFF THE FOUR-DAY SESSION. VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LUIS MARCHAND CHAIRED THE SIX-MAN PERUVIAN DELEGATION. SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE JULIO PHILIPPI AND
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FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL ADVISER ENRIQUE BERNSTEIN AGAIN

LED THE CHILEANS.

3. IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD EFFORTS TO SETTLE THE CORRIDOR ISSUE PEACEFULLY, THE DCM AND EMBOFF MET WITH BERNSTEIN ON JULY 20 TO ASK HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. JUST AS DURING OUR MEETING FOLLOWING THE FIRST ROUND (REF A), BERNSTEIN GAVE US A ROSY OVERVIEW.

4. BERNSTEIN SUMMED UP THE ATMOSPHERICS AS WARM, CASUAL AND FRIENDLY. THE PERUVIANS AGREED IN SUBSTANCE THAT TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OVER THE THORNY ISSUES OF CANALS, RAILROADS, AND

THE TRANSIT OF GOODS AND PERSONS WERE NOT INSUPERABLE. LAFTA AND ANDEAN PACT AGREEMENTS ALREADY ENVISAGED SPECIAL FRONTIER ZONES. BOTH SIDES TOOK A RELAXED VIEW OF THE INDIGENOUS CONTRABAND TRAFFIC -- A TWO-WAY STREET VARYING SLIGHTLY WITH CHANGING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRIES. THEY FOUND THAT RELATIVELY FEW, LOCAL, PEOPLE ACCOUNTED FOR MOST OF THE MILLION ANNUAL BORDER CROSSINGS. BERNSTEIN THOUGHT THE PERUVIANS HAD COME A LONG WAY SINCE APRIL. CONSENSUS ON SUCH TECHNICAL ANALYSIS DID NOT MAKE FOR A POLITICAL COMMITMENT, HOWEVER.

5. POLITICALLY, BERNSTEIN STILL THOUGHT IT WOULD BE VERY HARD FOR PERU TO SAY "NO." THE TALKS' MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION HAD BEEN TO SHOW THE GOP THAT NO OTHER SOLUTION WOULD MEET BOLIVIAN ASPIRATIONS AND BE ACCEPTABLE TO CHILE. NOW PERU RECOGNIZES THAT IT CANNOT AVOID THIS TOUGH POLITICAL DECISION INDEFINITELY.

6. IN THIS REGARD, WE RAISED CHILEAN AMBASSADOR TO LIMA FRANCISCO BULNES' RECENT MENTION OF A POSSIBLE SUMMIT MEETING. BERNSTEIN DISMISSED IT AS SOMETHING LONG PENDING, AND EASIER TO BRING ABOUT WITH THE CHANGES IN LIMA. BUT THERE WAS NO LINKAGE BETWEEN A POSSIBLE VISIT AND THE CORRIDOR ISSUE, AND NEITHER GOVERNMENT WAS RUSHING THE PLANNING.

7. THIS TIME CHILE DID NOT PUSH PERU TO FIX AN EARLY DATE FOR THE NEXT SERIES. BERNSTEIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CHILE/
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BOLIVIA TALKS WERE PARALYZED OVER THE KEY ISSUE: EXCHANGE OF TERRITORY. BERNSTEIN SAID HE COULD ONLY SURMISE THAT PRESIDENT BANZER WANTED TO KEEP THE TALKS ALIVE BUT INCONCLUSIVE: ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS HELPED HIM DOMESTICALLY WHILE ANY RESOLUTION WOULD PULL THIS PROP AND, WORSE, LEAVE HIM OPEN TO CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES. ACCORDING TO BERNSTEIN, PERU'S VELASCO HAD TRIED TO TOPPLE BANZER ANTICIPATING THAT A MORE REVOLUTIONARY FIGURE WOULD REPLACE

HIM. NOW, IN THE CHANGED ENVIRONMENT OF LIMA, PRESIDENT BERMUDEZ HAS AN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING BANZER IN BOLIVIA.

8. COMMENT: CHILE WANTS TO AVOID FINDING ITSELF IN THE POSITION OF APPEARING TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN A SETTLEMENT THAN BOLIVIA. A JULY 20 EDITORIAL IN "EL MERCURIO" ENTITLED "ATTENDING TO BOLIVIAN ASPIRATIONS" PROBABLY REFLECTED THE GOC'S POSITION ACCURATELY. IN SUM IT SAID THE BALL WAS NOW IN LA PAZ' COURT -- IF BOLIVIA EXPECTS CHILE TO CHIVVY LIMA, THE "SERRANOS" WILL HAVE TO PUT A FIRM PROPOSAL ON THE TABLE REGARDING TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENTS.

9. THE CHILEANS SEEM PROPERLY SATISFIED WITH THE COURSE OF EVENTS. WITH A BIT OF JUGGLING THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN PURSUE THIS GENERAL POLICY FOR A LONG TIME. IF A BREAKTHROUGH OCCURS, THEY ARE READY TO CAPITALIZE UPON IT; IF NOT, THE WORLD CANNOT BLAME CHILE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES, ACCESS TO PORTS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SANTIA07186
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760285-0509
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760728/aaaaaxwd.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SANTIAGO 4060, 76 SANTIAGO 7076, 76 SANTIAGO 4890
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUL 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR: SECOND ROUND PERU/CHILE TALKS AND OVERALL STATUS AS SEEN FROM SANTIAGO
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, PE, BL, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006